

**Linda Clair**  
**Seven-day Meditation Retreat**  
**Kallara Conference Centre – September 2019**  
**Transcription from Audio Recordings**

**File 6c – Thursday afternoon discussion session**

Linda: You've been very quiet L.

Question: It's been a difficult week. I came to the retreat sort of expecting things to sort themselves out and they haven't really.

Linda: What sort of things?

Question: The thoughts have been overwhelming and in particular way. I feel I've been, from the beginning, resisting my resistance. I haven't been able to connect with or stay with the breath for any length of time at all. I've been counting and usually space out. I've been spacing out a lot. What M. said earlier today suggested to me there's perhaps an old emotional issue that's been building up and building up and coming to head. Maybe not, I don't know. I've felt I have not been able to do anything except think about the fact that I can't stay in touch with the breath. I feel blocked from doing anything and going anywhere with it

Linda: Yes, I'd say, things will sort out after the retreat. When you have a retreat like this where there's deep, deep resistance and you feel you're not getting into it, it's enough just being here. Things are being sorted out, but maybe not in the way that you felt they should be – you're just not conscious of it. A lot happens deep down that you're not really aware of. You're only aware of the top layers. Deep down, things are churning up. And often the clearer you are the deeper the resistance.

Be careful when you go into a retreat not to expect anything. You sort of can't help it in a way but really watch that, because you'll be disappointed and things won't turn out the way you think they should or you want to. So try to go into any sort of retreat or a sitting as open as possible without even going, "Oh, I'm going to sit again and this will happen, that will happen, and it will probably be like this," because you don't know. But if you think that will happen it often turns out like that, because you've already prepared yourself when you said this is what's going to happen, so that's what does.

With the resistance, there's no easy way through it. And often just sitting with it – not pushing, just sitting with it where you don't feel like you're making inroads into it – is the way to go. What you're doing is sitting it out, and you've got to prove that you'll sit it out through the whole retreat. And often after, something will give. It might be emotional, it might not. So just persevere. And the last day and bit, just keep going. Just stay as stable as you. Don't worry about not being able to get in touch with the breath. Are you getting in pain in your body?

Question: Yes, since I changed my sitting arrangement slightly I now get more pain in the knees than in the bum. I thought that would be a way to push it a little bit, just to sit longer and longer. I've had a couple of long sits that tested that. They probably increased my tolerance to pain a little bit, but didn't seem to shift anything else.

Linda: Well, it didn't seem to but you don't get immediate results from this. So you don't do this and get immediate result. The results filter out and you see them, often in the weeks, the months, forever after any sort of retreat. It's affecting you all the time. Our habit is we give something and we expect something in return. But this, at times, is just sitting and you feel like you're getting no results, nothing in return. But that's what you've got to do: learn to give without expecting to get something immediately back.

And it's a big thing because we get taught the whole cause-effect thing – you do this and you get this back, you say this and get this back. But not necessarily with this. You can go for long periods where you don't feel like anything is happening and feel you're not getting anywhere, but you are, just by sitting it out and wearing it down and saying, "I'm not going to give up. I'll keep going." It's a very difficult thing to do that. But you will feel the effects afterwards.

Question: I'm really encouraged by some of the really dedicated meditators here who have, I have no doubt at all, been sitting through things like this year after year on retreat after retreat. That's a great support.

Linda: And anyone who's realised has gone through something like this – you have to. I didn't just wake up one day like this. It took years and years of really, really intense practice. And there's still stuff going on. It's very different now but I recognise what you're saying where you're just slogging away. And the resistance is there so deep and you don't want it to be there. It's very difficult to accept the resistance and you can't get into your breath. It's just a mess – it *feels* like a mess. But it's not.

You're making serious inroads by just sitting through that. And it's no measure of your progress how seemingly still your sitting is because there are definitely levels of it.

Question: I wasn't going to say anything but I feel I almost can't feel my belly, almost a physical notable no matter what I do with my breath. It's not been the whole retreat but it's a lot of it, just sitting with a lot of thinking and keeping on coming back. But it's as if when I come back I'm imagining coming back. So it feels very unstable somehow. And there's been great deal of pain that I didn't have last retreat. I haven't had pain like this for quite a while. That seems to have gone slightly, but the feeling of not being able to feel my belly – it's almost physical but it's not physical.

Linda: Maybe put your hand on your belly sometimes, just to check it's still there. 😊 It can help if you do sometimes put your hand there.

Question: And the attention, I don't know whether I just imagine attention, or whether it's just part of my thinking.

Linda: Well, don't analyse it too much. It probably is to a degree but don't get into thinking, "Is this attention, thinking?" Just come back to your body as much as you can, as much as you can.

Question: I have so much fear about talking but I have to. I've a few muscular skeletal issues, lower back and the left knee are probably the worst, which I'm managing mostly with medication. So I actually have a level of pain a lot of the time, but it's okay. What I'm finding – a little bit last retreat, but this time particularly – the pain is not the issue. It's my addiction to the thinking, I'm really seeing this time, is the really hard work. I realise that I'm pretty indulgent, I like the easy way out. And I can see I have to put an awful lot more effort into it. It's been a bit of a (shock) to really see that I need to put more effort into being more vigilant with it. Of course I spent the last hour mind-f...ing about talking! (laughing) So, it's been a bit of a wakeup call!

Linda: If you feel you need to put in more effort you probably do. We're so addicted to trying to find an easy way out. People spend years trying to find an easier way, whereas if you just went, "Okay, it's going to be hard work, effort," you'd be there by the time – well, there's no easy way. It's just a waste of energy trying to find an easy way. In my experience it just wouldn't make sense.

Question: No, it's a realisation, I've just got to do it. If this is what I want, I've just got to do it.

Linda: Yes, you just have to accept it was hard to get into this position and it takes work to get out of it. You're coming off that addiction and it is an incredibly deep addiction. You start to see that, and it can be overwhelming to see how much you think, and how everything you look at you think about. You can't look at a blank wall without thinking about and judging it. But bit by bit you disentangle yourself from it. And you have to be determined, you have to be *really* determined.

Question: The other thing is I've been getting an incredible amount of hot flushes this time. I probably get three a year but I've been having an awful lot this time! (laughing) It'd be nice to think that something's burning up.

Linda: It is, it's an energetic thing. I'd say probably a lot of people are getting it. I haven't had it much lately but I used to get it a lot, hot and then really cold, and then really hot. When you do have that very strong heat do your best to feel it as a sensation, a bit like when you have pain. Get right into it rather than going, "Oh, I'm too hot! I've got to do something about it." Really feel that heat as a sensation. And when you do that you do see that your reaction to it is what causes you to suffer from it, or causes you most of the discomfort. If you get into the pure sensation it might not be really comfortable, but it's different when you get into it rather than trying to get rid of it. But yes, it can become overwhelming, just really hot, like J. was talking about yesterday. But it's an energetic thing that happens.

Question: I know it's going to pass so it's interesting, here it goes again.

Linda: I feel like it's a friction of time and the timeless, the friction between the two.

Question: I don't have anything particular to say, but I've been wanting to talk for a few days, but I feel really scared to so I thought I would. (laughing) I've had a bit of what a lot of people have been saying, like not being able to feel my belly. But overall it's been a relatively peaceful retreat for me.

Linda: That's nice, that's good. The walking can help you to feel your body a bit more too. So if you're having trouble get up and do the walking and really get into it.

Question: Okay, I have been.

Linda: Often after the walking I sit down and my whole body is tingling and vibrating. It's really quite good.

Question: I was also a little bit sick when I started the retreat, and probably the most tired I've ever been doing a retreat, and I've been sleeping more than normal. Initially that felt really nice, and the last few days I've had a bit of guilt about skipping the morning. I didn't sit this morning. I'm finding it hard to tell what's resistance and what's my body needing to rest.

Linda: Well, if you've been sick – have you had that flu thing too? (No.) Just rest, just rest. Don't feel guilty about it. If you really feel you need to rest, do that.